

# The GI's HANDBOOK on



WHY RANK and FILE GIs  
NEED AN  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THEIR OWN.

by **F. O. RICHARDSON**

With an introduction  
by Pvt. Andrew Stapp

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published by the  
**COMMITTEE for GI RIGHTS**

Since the first printing of this booklet, many things have happened. The American Servicemen's Union (ASU) has been formed. It has grown rapidly. Though still in its organizing stages, it has become a force with ASU brothers at work organizing at bases around the world and the brass nervously and fearfully trying to stop our progress.

But they can't.

They can't stop it because it is being carried forward not by just a few leaders but by masses of rank-and-file Gls.

And that's the key to it.

Rank-and-file action -- YOU!

Every member should be an organizer. Every member should think not in terms of waiting to follow directives, but as a leader himself who pushes forward trying out and developing new methods of winning over more guys — uniting them around our common goals and taking steps to make them happen.

The job of the New York headquarters is to provide support for those organizing on the bases. We can furnish ideas. We will work to coordinate activity. We will put out publicity and arrange legal help. But the organizing must be done in the barracks.

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The American Servicemen's Union grew out of the struggles of a group of rank-and-file Gls at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, led by Pvt. Andy Stapp.

Andy demonstrated how organizing can be done in the barracks. He was court-martialed twice and finally forced out of the Army with an undesirable (to the brass) discharge. Now the bold, driving leadership he showed at Fort Sill is being demonstrated on a national scale. Andy is the chairman of the ASU.

The brass tried hard to crush the Sill group. They failed.

It's important to know why.

First, a small but strong leadership group was formed. They meant business. They knew what they wanted; they learned what they were up against and they planned their

(Continued inside back cover)

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**COMMITTEE for GI RIGHTS**

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The writer of this booklet is F. O. Richardson, a veteran of World War II. Richardson served as a rifleman (PFC) in the 3rd Battalion of the 508 Parachute Infantry, attached to the 82nd Airborne Division.

He won the Bronze Star for his part as a pathfinder in the invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944.

An active unionist, he was for two years (1962-1964) the editor of Buffalo Labor Action, an independent labor monthly.

Richardson was the first veteran to speak out publicly against the U.S. war in Vietnam when he addressed a meeting organized by Youth Against War & Fascism in Union Square, New York City on Veterans' Day, November 11, 1965.



Shortly before take-off for the D-Day invasion of Normandy on the night of June 5, 1944 -- PFC Richardson is fourth from left, second row -- toasting to luck with a friend.

## INTRODUCTION

The author of this pamphlet fought as a paratrooper through both the Normandy and Ardennes Campaigns of 1944-1945. Although over two decades have passed since his World War II combat experiences, the arrogant officers, the drum-head courtsmartial, the overcrowded stockades, the sickening racism, in fact all the repressive military apparatus he faced and struggled against still oppress the GI today.

In a world characterized by rapid change and flux, the American army has changed not at all (except to grow larger with the first permanent peace-time draft in our history). It is a stark unpleasant fact that enlisted men have not yet organized for their own defense in the armed forces. A great revolutionary of the past century said, "Without struggle there is no progress." Frederick Douglass was right. If we are ever going to force a modicum of justice upon our haughty officers we must begin to organize with the only power we possess — our numbers.

Some will say that this sort of fight will get us in trouble. But aren't we in trouble when we are driven about like cattle, when we work 16 or 18 hours a day without saying "enough," when we allow ourselves to be used as pawns to bleed and die in some foreign land for the profits of the United Fruit Company or Standard Oil? Aren't we in trouble when we are forced to fight in wars of aggression like that in Vietnam, with no say in the matter? Aren't we in trouble?

Should we listen to the bootlickers who counsel submission? No! We must band together in the fight for an enlisted men's union and show these brass gods who rule us that we are men and not dumb animals.

Pvt. Andrew Stapp, U.S. 52666589  
Fort Sill, Oklahoma

Andy Stapp is from a small town in Pennsylvania near Philadelphia. He was against the war before he got drafted and kept right on opposing it when he went into the Army. The brass shipped him to Fort Sill, Oklahoma and tried to scare the other soldiers away from him. It didn't work.

The other guys didn't really like the war either and when they heard someone who could nail it down for them they began to listen.

Before long Andy was defeating a few gung-ho types in barracks bull-session debates in front of a gang of other soldiers. And not only were other soldiers listening to him,



but others were joining into what turned into an organized group of GIs who were educating, agitating and in general raising a hell of a lot of dust against the war.

Harassment by worried brass has only succeeded in arousing still more GIs against their cast iron discipline and the war they're carrying on.

## Chapter I

### THE WAY IT IS

You know you're up against it.

You wish that civilians back home knew what it is really like and wonder how the people of this country ever allowed them to run things this way.

You know what it's like being a rank and file enlisted man. You've had your nose shoved in it: jump whenever an officer or a non-com barks, "Get up!" or "Pick up that cigarette!" or "To the right flank, march!"

You're supposed to show your submissiveness to officers, sort of get down on your knees for them while standing up, so to speak: "Salute, when you see an officer!" "Say, 'sir' when you speak to an officer, soldier!" "Stand at attention when you're addressing an officer!"

That's all to show that they are your lord and master and that you are their humble servant.

You're supposed to stand stiff like a robot when they shout, "Attention!" and you're supposed to do the manual of arms like a puppet on a string if they, in their masterly-officer way, give the orders.

Fix bayonets if they give the order.

Fire if they give the order.

Charge if they give the order.

Get killed if they give the order.

(They call it "becoming a soldier.")

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To make sure you get the idea they let you see the stockade and let you know about what can happen to you if you don't do exactly what they say to do.

Extra duty.

Restrictions.

Court martial.

The stockade.

A bad discharge so you would be screwed up in civilian life.

In a way — as it is now — they have you locked in a sort of chain gang. This is something that must be changed, and will be changed — by the GIs themselves.

But even if you submit now, get down and crawl for them (and you weren't cut out to be a slave or a stooge) you still face trouble.



# on MILITARY INJUSTICE

## Chapter II

IF THEY SEND YOU TO VIETNAM . . .



Fightin' and dyin' for important people like me — that's your job, son!

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If they send you to Vietnam where the big shots of this country are shipping you to fight a war for them, you're in for it.

It may mean you coming home without an arm, or legs or without eyes to see with, or with your nerves shot. And it may mean being shipped home in a plastic bag the way they do it these days.

Oh, yeah, your officers will be behind you — a hell of a long way behind you, as a matter of fact, and probably at the bottom of a nice deep dugout. You're expendable, you know, but officers — they're too valuable to waste.

Sad as it may be (for some people) some of them do get wasted, however. Veterans of Vietnam have told us of the Viet Cong making special efforts to nail the officers — of letting a whole column of enlisted men go by and then opening up on the officers.

So some of them do get killed, but practically all low-ranking line officers.

The generals — who want the war and run the whole show for their own benefit and the benefit of others who are making a lot of money on it every day — aren't supposed to die. (One general did die in an accident awhile back and it was big news back in the states.) They hole-in-fifty or sixty miles behind the action someplace and then talk tough about the war and how they are just eager for action.

When the men of the 3rd Marine Division were getting fed up with the whole thing at Con Thien which was under heavy shelling, a New York Times reporter interviewed their commanding general about it.

The interview was at his headquarters sixty miles behind the action. New York Times, July 14, 1967.

Here's what the general said: "Hell, you give them a kick in the butt and shake them up a little and they'll be all right."

Another one of these 60-miles-behind-the-lines heroes, a major, chimed in: "All we need is a little shoot-em-up action and we'll be all right."

Try and top that for sheer bravery! And if you get your ass shot off don't think he won't get a medal for outstanding leadership too.

Chapter III  
AND IF YOU GET HIT . . .

But if an officer does get wounded and you get hit at the same time, here is an example of the difference in the treatment.

In Walter Reed Hospital an investigator found (Drew Pearson column, Aug. 25, 1965) the enlisted men's wards crowded, dirty and hot.

"There was only one shower and four wash basins for all the men in the ward... forty-five beds are crowded into one room. Young men, arms and legs blown off in Vietnam, hobble and jostle around the packed quarters." The heat in the room is terrible.





But downstairs in the officers' hospital quarters everything is not only clean and nice but the air is cooled by an air conditioner.

Then the investigator discovered that this second-hand air is then blown up into the enlisted men's ward — that is their share of the cooling system!

If they don't send you to Vietnam (or perhaps before they send you) they may want to use you against people in this country — your own people — such as those who traveled to Washington to protest against the war and were clubbed and tear gassed (by orders of the Pentagon generals), or those who rebelled against poverty and police beatings in Detroit or Newark and were shot.

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### Chapter IV MILITARY INJUSTICE

But no matter where you are sent, just putting in your time in the service, you will have to put up with what they call "military justice."

I put the term "military justice" in quotation marks because it's not any kind of justice at all.

It's not meant to be.

"Military justice" has just one main purpose.

Beating everybody into line.

The idea is to club down on somebody as an example to all the others that they had better get into that Army lock-step if they know what is good for them, or to crack down on anyone who shows signs of bucking the Army discipline (or the discipline of any of the other military or naval branches). Guilt or innocence or possible justification of some act that is a crime in the Army is a completely secondary matter. If you are accused, you are assumed guilty and a harsh punishment is in order so that everyone else sees what the consequences are.

The only question the brass usually ask themselves is how hard they should hit the victim in order to make their point.

There is one other question which they are going to have to ask in the future — and it is an important one: will there be a public stink about this that can backfire on us? — (We'll discuss this more later).

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## Chapter V

### WHAT THE ARMY CALLS A "CRIME"

And as for the "crime" itself, that too is a matter that needs a little straightening out. "Crime" in civilian life is usually taking money from rich people; and it is committed by poor people.

(When rich people take money, it is not crime; it is good business.)

But in the Army or other services, "crime" is still another thing. It is some act by an enlisted man that tends to upset the code (made up by the brass) that he is a lowly turd who must respectfully obey all orders and wishes of his "superiors," such acts as:

Leaving and saying the hell with it.

Telling an officer to off.

Punching an officer in the mouth as he richly deserves.

There is actually nothing "morally" wrong with any of these things. In fact they should deserve applause from all people who believe in rooting for the underdog, but according to "military justice," which is something like the old slave law for keeping the slaves in their place, these acts are federal crimes.

And, for the most part, acts of individual resistance such as these are ineffectual.

In response to pressure against a flagrantly unjust set of military laws, the authorities put together a new version in 1950 and issued "The Uniform Code of Military Justice" in 1951 and a "Manual for Courts-Martial" which lists and describes and hashes over (in legal references to such and

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such a case, etc. that would take a Philadelphia lawyer to figure out) what can be done to you if you are accused of disobeying a military law.

It is not a bad idea to know something about this "Code" since some of it might be used to help you. But basically it is a legal fraud.

It is designed to put on a show of a "fair trial" — while the verdict (guilty, of course) has already been decided in advance by the commanding officer or his officer poop boys.

## Chapter VI

### COURT MARTIAL - YOU'RE GUILTY!

There has been little information on courts martial in the public press. Recently a series of documented articles on military trials appeared in the Staten Island Advance of Staten Island, N.Y. The series, written by Jack C. Landau, a Washington correspondent for the paper, gave facts and official figures not often seen outside Pentagon files. Among other things Landau revealed that about 95 per cent of all courts martial end up with the verdict: GUILTY!

Think of that! It means that as things are being run now that once you are accused by the military you are practically convicted. Mathematically you have only a 5 per cent chance of an acquittal -- and actually you probably have less than that since it is likely that more than a few of the acquittals are officers who again have the edge on you since they are always tried by their fellow officers.

Furthermore, this does not count the thousands of "convictions" that are handed out without a trial under Article 15 of the military code which works like this:

You are charged with something like a pass violation. You have probably had little experience with courts and legalities and you don't know what your rights are or how to demand them if you did.

The company commander (or commander of a comparable unit) calls you in and says that you can either confess you are guilty of whatever they are charging you with and take an Article 15, or else face a court martial. You very likely figure that you don't have a chance in a court martial so you take the article 15: restriction, loss of pay, hard labor etc.



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### Chapter VII

#### SUMMARY COURT MARTIAL

But let's say you are given a court martial — a summary court martial for so called "minor offenses." Here is the situation you probably face.

You are a long way from your family and outside your civilian home area. You don't have much money. You don't know any lawyers. You don't know the law. You're alone — and you are faced with all the power of the Army.

The "fair trial" procedure is a joke.

There is no jury. There is only one officer to be your prosecutor, judge, and jury. There is a brief bit of legal mumbo-jumbo and then the verdict.

"Guilty as charged."

And if you are Black — you're twice as guilty.

In 1966, 94.2 of all summary courts martial ended in convictions. (Staten Island Advance, September 13, 1967)

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## Chapter VIII

### A SPECIAL COURT MARTIAL - THE RACISM SHOWED

And of the more serious special courts martial— 95.7 per cent convictions.

Here is an example of one of these affairs.

PFC George Dowell, Jr. of St. Louis is a Marine veteran of Vietnam. He is black.

After his return from Vietnam, Dowell was stationed at Camp Lejeune; he returned there from a pass. Some white marines taunted him with racial epithets.

There was a fracas. <sup>c</sup> The officer of the day came up and Dowell, justifiably angry, and now confronted by another white, was reported to have said, "I don't give a (obscenity) who you are!"

It is not reported that any of the white racist marines who began the affair were arrested or tried. But for his remark, PFC Dowell was given a special court martial for "disrespect to an officer."

Three officers made up the jury and one of them also served as the judge. It is a good bet that they were white and they were certainly fellow officers and fellow members of the officers' club of the officer of the day who made the charge against PFC Dowell. What verdict would you expect? Guilty, of course!

PFC Dowell, black veteran of Vietnam, was sentenced to six months imprisonment and a bad conduct discharge.

"Military justice!" No black enlisted man was going to get away with "disrespect" to a white officer no matter what provocation there might be.

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But what about appeal of the decision as guaranteed in a civil court?

Even with outside support, legal and otherwise, the channels of military appeal are just more of the same -- a slight reduction of the sentence perhaps, a reversal of the verdict, practically never.

Some 39,000 men were given a special court martial in 1966.



"Now that you've learned to say 'sir' to your superiors, I hope you'll remember it when you get back into civilian life."

## Chapter IX

### BRANDED WITHOUT ANY TRIAL

The dice are even more loaded than this in actions in which thousands of men have been given less than honorable discharges without any trial whatsoever.

According to Landau, "In 100 per cent of all discharge cases, he (the defendant) has no right to examine the evidence against him, no right to confront his accusers, to subpoena witnesses on his own behalf or to have a record of his hearing."

Half a million men in the U.S. now carry the brand of an "undesirable discharge."

Those half-million men have been blacklisted. By an arbitrary act that is a violation of the most basic rights the Constitution stands for, they have been deprived of the right to many jobs and made second class citizens.

This branding of human beings like cattle as being "undesirable" by a dictatorial military machine is a crime.

Who the hell gives these brass-brained bastards in their fancy officers' suits the right of such power over other men? It must be stopped.

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### Chapter X

#### LIKE THE MOVIES - THE GENERAL COURT MARTIAL

The general court martial is what most civilians think of when they hear of a military trial — the kind you see in the movies where the hero (an officer, you may be sure) defends himself and his honor before a dignified and oh so fair jury of — officers. (If there is an enlisted man he is pictured as a loyal but stupid jerk for laughs).

In the general court martial the defendant is given what at first appears to be his constitutional guarantees: defense counsel, jury, court reporter keeping a record of the proceedings (for later reference or appeal), a law officer-judge keeping tab on every right and privilege of the defendant, etc.

But on closer inspection the general courts martial for enlisted men turns out to be merely a more elaborate staging of the same kind of rigged trial as the lesser courts martial.

The court principals take their orders from the commanding officer and in spite of legal displays, a more extensive staging and a bigger cast, the final act is generally concluded in the same way. The jury of officers finds the enlisted defendant guilty.

And actually only about 3 per cent of the defendants get the benefit of these rituals anyway: out of 67,000 courts martials in 1966, only 2,092 were general courts martial. (Staten Island Advance, September 12, 1967)

## Chapter XI

### THE GENERAL GIVES THE WORD

#### GENERAL CLEARED ON COURT ACTIONS

...Colonel Barr said the hearing showed that General Lipscomb, "in his endeavor to maintain the discipline and morale" of the thousands of trainees under his command, did take "an active role" in the administration of military justice...

Colonel Barr said a commanding officer convening courts-martial "has a large measure of discretion in selecting court members." He said no proof had been presented to show that the general had abused his discretion by a new order excluding all lieutenants from service on courts for lack of experience.

While sentences may have grown in severity following the Lipscomb orders, the law officer said, the reason could have been acceleration of the war in Vietnam.

"The war in Vietnam was having a greater impact," he said in the ruling, "and, as the past has shown, sentences adjudged are more severe during a time of war or national emergency."

THE NEW YORK TIMES

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1967



U. S. Army

T. H. LIPSCOMB, a general who was exposed for overdoing his control of courts-martial — but got an okay from fellow brass anyway.

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Up until the middle of 1967, Major General Thomas H. Lipscomb was the commanding officer of Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri. At that time he was quietly transferred to Washington.

But at least a year before, the Army knew that Lipscomb was not only controlling courts martial in the usual way, but that he was crudely and arrogantly going beyond even the Army bounds of enforcing "military justice."

It is probable that a power struggle among the brass opened the case up, but as a result we can get a glimpse of a general's view of "justice" in the Army.

On June 30, 1966, the colonel, who was no less than the chief of the Army's Defense Appellate Division, charged Lipscomb with a series of flagrant violations of the Uniform Military Code which says: "No person... may attempt to coerce or, by an unauthorized means, influence the action of a court martial." (Article 37 of the Manual for Courts Martial)

Sworn affidavits showed that Lipscomb had:

1. Told his courts martial officers to hand out tough sentences and bawled them out for some comparatively light sentences that had been given out.

2. Appointed as jurors only senior officers whose entire future depended on him and excluded lieutenants who might leave the Army after three years and therefore might feel less dependent and exercise a little more personal decision.

3. Threatened a young defense lawyer who objected to some of the general's more open and flagrant control of the court.

4. Told his subordinate officer to buck a courts martial judge who wasn't under his command.

5. Ordered the base legal officer illegally and against his wishes — to lecture courts martial jurors about the "importance of military discipline." (In other words, forget any pretence of justice).

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Lipscomb had been instrumental in handing out "tough" sentences to at least 70 GIs. It seems probable that relatives and friends of some of these men may have protested and that a faction among the brass had taken up the protest against him because they feared his crude methods would stir up a public hornet's nest.

It was a year before they finally transferred him and took the power of imprisoning young men at Fort Wood out of his hands. He was sent to the materiel command in Washington.

In spite of the serious nature of this scandal, the public heard little or nothing about it until the fall of 1967.

In October a hearing was held at Fort Sheridan, Illinois, concerning the charges made against Lipscomb. He was arrogant about the whole thing. He even attempted to intimidate a major who was questioning him at the hearing — catching him in the hall and "young-manning" him about what he had better not do. (New York Times, October 12, 1967) The general was "reprimanded" for this. (By the colonel!)

So what was the upshot of this sound and fury concerning a general violating the Military Code?

On October 26 he was given a whitewash. "General is Cleared of Swaying Courts" said the headline (front page of the New York Times October 27, 1967).

The enlisted men who were victims of Lipscomb's kangaroo court trials may remain in prison or carry the burden of "less than honorable" discharges, but the general is okayed by his fellow brass-hats.

Kangaroo courts will continue... until GIs themselves unite to stand up for each other.



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## Chapter XII

### THE MILITARY COUP D'ETAT

"Military justice," as we have seen — and you probably know all too well from your own experience — is a fraud.

But it is based on a much bigger and more basic fraud.

In World War II, while we were still overseas fighting the war, the Pentagon brass began one of the most massive campaigns of propaganda, pressure and brainwashing to ram through measures for a peace time draft.

(For a history of this period see *The Warfare State* by Fred Cook).

There was deep and angry opposition to a peace time draft — after we had supposedly fought a war to end militarism — and the struggle continued for a decade.

To mollify the opponents of the draft, some of whom were frightened most by the fascist nature of Army laws instead of the basic wrongness of the whole thing, the military authorities adopted a new and prettified "Uniform Code of Military Justice" in 1950.

But behind supposed guarantees of "justice" in the Army or other services, the military knew that they could do as they damn well pleased when they got draftees in their hands — and there was no organized opposition to keep them even halfway honest.

In a certain sense it was a military coup d'etat. It gave the Pentagon massive power, the power to draft, train, and control millions of American men.

Using this power, the military brass has usurped almost unlimited power over you and millions of others.

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## Chapter XIII

### WHO WANTS THE WAR AND WHY THEY WANT IT

The generals want the war.

The generals who would send you into the tropical jungles of Vietnam to stumble into booby traps and ambushes — they're made of different stuff than Sherman who said, "war is hell!" — they think it's heaven.

And for them it is something like that.

As the war grows and the military effort swells, they move into positions of more prestige, more power, and into the halls of business where there is more money than you ever saw — or ever will see.

But they aren't the only ones who want the war.

The war is like a golden rain to big firms who supply not millions but billions of dollars in goods to the government to use in the war.

And herein lies a story.

As the war grows, more and more billions of dollars of tax money is turned over to the Army, the Navy, the Marines to buy guns and belt buckles, airplanes and peanut butter, bombs and GI underwear, etc.

The name of the game is "Who gets the contract?"

To play in this game you have to be rich — like the Rockefellers, for instance. (By the way, did you ever hear of any Rockefellers getting killed in Vietnam?) And you have to own big companies that can supply the bombs and belt buckles, etc. Then you get to play for the contract. Now anybody as rich as the Rockefellers is going to get a lot of contracts — but

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never enough. And some other rich families, like the Du Ponts, for instance, also want more of the same kind of contracts. (By the way, did you ever hear of any Du Ponts getting killed in the war?)

It helps to have a general for a friend. And it helps to have a general working for you because they can get you contracts. Yes, it pays well to have the brass-hats on your payroll to bring in business.



General, war ain't hell — it's damn good business. Right?

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In 1959 and 1960, a remarkable hearing about retired officers taking top jobs with business conducted by the Hebert Committee of the House of Representatives revealed some interesting things about this matter. A table compiled for the committee in 1958 showed that:

Boeing Aircraft, the top war goods supplier, had 61 retired officers on their payroll and 5 of them flag rank or generals.

General Dynamics was number two and trying harder; they had 186 retired officers and 27 generals or officers of flag rank.

Lockheed had 171 retired brass-hats and 27 generals or comparable rank.

Etc.

The point is this: top brass-hats are business partners of the biggest businessmen who sell supplies to the military at huge profits. The war is not hell to generals; it's the big payoff.

Your commander, General Bullethead, safe in his comfortable, air-conditioned headquarters where he is waited upon like a Rockefeller, is a partner of the Rockefellers, a junior partner.

"General," they tell him, "as you know, we need you to pacify Asia and parts out there so that we can get raw materials cheap to make goods with — and when it's under control it will be a market where we can sell Coca Cola and candy bars and fly spray... at a good buck.

"And, General, we'll take care of you. How would you like to work with us for say a hundred thousand or so a year when you retire?"

General MacArthur went to work for Remington-Rand at \$100,000 a year. General Lucius Clay went to work for Continental Can for \$108,000. Some lesser generals have it rougher — they only get \$30,000 or \$40,000 for their fun money. But they get along.

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The generals know what the war is for.

Money.

Invest your life. It's for a good cause. If they send you home in a plastic bag, your relatives will have the pleasure of knowing that you did your part in making the rich a little bit richer.



Con Thien, Vietnam, July 2, 1967

## Chapter XIV DENIED FREEDOM

The Declaration of Independence offered "Life..."

But military rulers send you to die.

"Liberty."

But they imprison you.

"The pursuit of happiness."

But they bar your way.

The Constitution says, "Freedom of speech."

But they declare it illegal.

"Freedom of the press."

They try to limit what you read.

"Freedom of assembly and the right to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

Denied.

In a trial, the guarantee is an "impartial jury."

If tried, you are sentenced by officers who are your lords and masters, agents of the Pentagon which demands your absolute obedience. When you are alone against them, they can, as things stand, decide your future: order you around like an animal, send you to die for them, deny your most basic demand for justice.

A medieval serf had as much freedom as that.

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But this is not the Middle Ages. And you are not a serf.

You have rights. They were fought for and won by men and women who gave their blood to get them. They are written down on paper to insure that they are known to all.

It is time to demand them.

But before you can demand them you have to get the picture of them clear in your mind; there is a fallacy, a phony idea that was driven so deep into our minds that it has to be rooted out.

It is the false idea that you have to do everything the officers say, no matter what it is.

The truth is that everything in this country is supposed to be based on the basic law as expressed in the Constitution.

And the Constitution does not give them any authority to act as your lords and masters as they do.

Do not take my word for it. Read it yourself. Look through every article; see if it gives General Lipscomb or Captain Jones the right to order you to call them "Sir" and march to your death like a robot if they order it. It gives them no such right.

It does not exempt the military from civilian rule—and you are a civilian in uniform.

## Chapter XV

### RIGHTS AND HOW TO GET THEM

In particular the Constitution does not give anyone the right to send you into a war that never was voted on in any form by the people of this country. Even the fat and crooked politicians of Congress have not given their approval to the Constitutionally required declaration of war.

These are guarantees that are in effect unless the country is a police state and the constitution is suspended.

You may be thinking, yes, but the brass can give an order and we have to obey, no matter what it is.

The brass has this completely dictatorial power now for one enormously important reason.

They are organized; you are not.

They act together as one against each of you—and even use some of the enlisted men against each other. Slaveowners did the same.

A hundred years ago if three men got together to talk about organizing a labor union, it was called a "conspiracy." They were jailed.

Did the Constitution say that anyone had the right to jail men for this? No, it didn't. But it was not until they demanded their rights to organize and took their rights that they got what was rightfully theirs.

Furthermore, we are not living in that stone age of labor. We are living in an age of hydrogen bombs and intercontinental missiles, and people everywhere are questioning and demanding their rights.

It is time to question the military about basic human free-



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doms that were won in this country in the Revolution two hundred years ago and in Civil War a hundred years ago.

It is time to get your rights.

And to get them there must be an organization to represent you from the platoon level upwards.

Neither the platoon commander, nor the company commander, nor the general who runs the base can be allowed to go on with the complete dictator-like power which these military bosses have taken over for themselves.

Their tin-god attitudes must be challenged by an organized group which knows its rights and demands them.

Rank and file soldiers, privates and those specialists who do not have authority to boss others, must meet and discuss their rights. They must elect leaders and committees that can put forth their demands verbally and in writing.

The circulation of a mimeographed news sheet by the men and for the men would be an excellent way to begin, and to expose unfair practices and to keep all informed.

Regular meetings should be held to discuss problems and plan measures of demanding their solution.

Years ago men who worked for coal mines and steel mills lived with their families in conditions that were near to slavery. They lived in poverty in company-owned shacks. They were sometimes paid in paper that could only be used in the company store. They worked twelve and fourteen hour days. They had no rights. Bosses (like officers) and foremen (like sergeants) had almost complete power over their lives. To disobey was to be fired and blacklisted (dishonorable discharge) so that family and all would be kicked out of the company house with no money and nowhere to go.

But they ended this virtual slavery.

They formed organizations of their own—against all the odds that faced them.

Unions.

Unfortunately the word "union" now has acquired a hollow

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ring to many -- largely because of fat cat union leaders who fail to represent the needs of the men they claim to represent. But you only have to know what it would be like without unions to know how important they are.

You need one.

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### Chapter XVI

#### NOW IS THE TIME

Behind you in this drive will be the support of a mass movement of civilians—the millions who oppose the war and are turning more resolutely against it and the sending of more GI s to die in it.

This is a massive force now in your favor in organizing against the dictatorial power of the brass.

The people in this country are against the war. They do not want you to go. They do not want you to die. And the war has meant rising prices, rising taxes, less for schools, less for medical needs, less for everything for the good of the people.

These millions are more and more sympathetic to your needs as against the demands of the Pentagon and their brass network.

Soldiers may be less vocal because of restrictions which silence them but more personally against the war which may mean their lives.

In spite of the brainwashing they know they have not the slightest reason to fight and perhaps get killed in this war.

And the brass know this.

And they fear it.

They are trying to close their ranks even more against us and to beat soldiers into line—that is why they white-washed General Lipscomb. In spite of sworn affidavits that were incriminating—even by officers' standards—they feared that if he were punished it would weaken their con-

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trol, which, in truth, has become weaker as most GI's go to war reluctantly.

There is a huge debate going on now across the entire country. It is over this war which most of the generals would like to make larger—involving you and millions in a still bigger war.

You are the substance of that debate. Your life is at stake. If there was ever a time to act in defense of what is right and what is also in your best interest, now is the time.



A part of thousands of anti-war demonstrators in Washington on 10/21/67, marching to the Pentagon.

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## Chapter XVII

### AN ORGANIZATION FOR GIs

You have not only the Constitutional right to organize your fellow GIs, you also have the great tradition and the example of American labor organizing.

If someone tells you that it can't be done in the Army, remember, they said it couldn't be done in industry.

Ford in particular was a hell-hole. Henry Ford had gangs of thugs to beat guys up who even thought about a union. Ford, who admired Hitler's methods and got a Nazi medal for his method, had thugs, cops, and spies at his command. He had men fired from their jobs, heads busted, people killed. He said he would never deal with a union.

The guys that worked there organized a union in 1941. Ford dealt with it. They got rights, better conditions, better pay—and any time anyone had a problem there was a union around to help.

It's true, of course, these unions sometimes aren't all they should be—but just be up against it with no union at all and see what kind of rights you have.

Like the rank and file in the service.

McNamara was one of the top bosses of Ford. There he had to deal with a union representing something close to 200,000 workers. Now he is the boss of the entire military establishment of some 3,300,000 servicemen but they have nobody at all to represent their interests in dealing with him.

You need union representatives to speak for you in getting rights from McNamara and from all the rest of the military bosses right down the line.

(now from Clark Clifford, big business lawyer, who has taken over from McNamara -- Ed., March 1968)

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It's time to start thinking about it.

Talking about it.

Acting.

In certain ways, the Army and the other branches of the service are easy places in which to organize. You live with the rest of the guys. You're together night and day. You have a chance to talk practically any time. They already know that conditions stink and they're going to consider any idea that could improve them.

After you think it through in your own mind, talk it over with a friend--another private, someone not a part of the control network.

Your buddies may reject it at first. They may say-- "How could you ever do that in the Army?"

Remind them that soldiers have a union even in the West German Army right now. (Pressure from the German people after World War II has held the draft time to 18 months, and the Army union has gained benefits for those forced to put in that time.)

Remind them that people said they could never win mass unions in industry.

Conditions may vary widely between your outfit and another. But one thing is sure: you have a rotten deal--grievances, problems that nobody is going to do anything about unless they're forced to. Talk these things over together -- not just the usual hopeless bitching to get it out of your system, but with the aim of an agreement on a protest about it.

Contact the Committee for GI Rights.

Experienced people with solid union experience will be on tap to aid you in whatever way is possible.

Not just advice.

Not just legal counsel.

But contact with other GIs.

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Support from civilians who can travel to your base.

And, don't ever underestimate it, publicity; we'll do our best to expose grievances and arouse people to demand that the Army cut it out.

The best support you can have, however, is still going to be organized protest from the GIs themselves.

The brass are afraid of this. They are already worried about the tremendous public anger at what they are doing.

It may be coincidental, but it is not accidental that Congress is right now (October 1967), after the huge protest at the Pentagon, passing a raise in pay for soldiers. They too are afraid that you don't want to fight their war and they figure they had better add something to your tiny pay and they hope this will make you more resigned to going over and getting killed for them.

Even so they are pretty cheap about it. If you are a private you will only get about five bucks a month more. (A Chief of Staff who already makes many thousands will get a raise of \$123.60 a month.)

The fear that the brass has of organized GIs, and particularly organized GI s with civilian support, can be best seen in the recent case at Fort Sill where a group of soldiers organized by Pvt. Andrew Stapp and supported by civilian youth of the Committee for GI Rights has won wide sympathy among the 45,000 soldiers at the base. You can read the full story of this in a pamphlet put out by the Committee for GI Rights, "Soldiers Against the War."

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## Chapter XVIII

### A WORD ON COURTS MARTIAL

Should the Army bring court martial proceedings against a man in your company or unit now before a GIs' union exists to act in an organized way, there are supportive measures that should be taken. First you need counsel. You can act as a union grievance man.

Contact the Committee for GI Rights. Immediate steps will be taken to get legal assistance.

The accused has a right, not only to counsel, but to question witnesses against him—officers or whoever.

Support at the courts martial is very important. One way to insure that sympathetic fellow GIs are allowed to attend is to have them called as witnesses—even if they are not actually used to testify; this puts them in the courtroom. The brass feel the pressure.

Support from civilian sympathizers is important. The Committee for GI Rights will make every effort to see that some appear before and during the trial.

The Constitutional right of appeal can also be pressed.

But it should be borne in mind that while legal maneuvers are sometimes helpful, they are no substitute for rank and file power to gain rights and prevent harassment by the brass.



# on MILITARY INJUSTICE

## Chapter XIX

### WHAT MASS ACTION OF RANK AND FILE GIs DID IN 1945

Millions of GIs, sailors, and Marines won their freedom from the military in 1945 and 1946 because of mass pressure.

Thousands of GIs marched through the streets of European cities after the war had ended. The brass still wanted to hold them. The GIs demanded that they be shipped home.

These organized demonstrations also occurred in the Pacific area.

The demands of the soldiers were supported by the mass sentiment at home.

They were shipped home.

Against the wishes of the military brass (subsequent writings by some have been a gnashing of teeth that they had to free these men so soon), the GIs were brought back and discharged within a matter of weeks or months after the end of the war.

It temporarily (at least) wrecked the plans of the Pentagon that ranged from using millions of GIs as policemen all over the world to beginning another war, this time against the Soviet Union, which had been an ally against the Nazis.

Unfortunately, these mass demonstrations by GIs which brought their freedom, left nothing behind in the Army as a foundation for a union. The militant soldiers were discharged. Youthful recruits, who had not gone through the war and gained unity and militance for their rights, replaced them.

But now a new time has arrived.

Soldiers, sailors, and those in other branches of the military service are talking it over.

It is time to turn the talk into organization.

Rank and file GIs are going to have an organization of their own to speak for themselves.

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- Protest parade, Manila -

(Continued from front cover)

actions carefully. They won wide support from other guys on the base.

Second, they got the backing of a well-organized group of civilians — The Committee for GI Rights, and Youth Against War and Fascism.

When you are organizing, your aim should be to build a strong inner group of leaders (perhaps only two or three) who are completely serious and determined and who discuss and plan actions thoroughly.

Where possible, it is helpful to form an alliance with local civilian supporters.

And be sure to keep in close touch with the ASU headquarters.

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Andy Stapp was discharged from the Army at Fort Sill on April 19, 1968. The American Servicemen's Union with Andy as chairman took formal shape in May 1968 with the BOND as its voice. (The writer of this booklet, F.O. Richardson, is BOND managing editor.)

Since that time the ASU has supported GIs in their fight for justice.

When GIs refuse to go to Vietnam, the ASU is there supporting them.

When a large group of black GIs at Fort Hood, Texas, refused to go to Chicago to put down the people during the Democratic Convention, the ASU was there. (13 were acquitted and the rest got relatively light sentences.)

Recently at Fort Dix, N.J., the brass abused GIs they had jailed in the stockade until the men fought back. Then the brass charged them with "rioting."

We must support them, and all our Union brothers, against this concentration-camp justice.

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When this booklet was first printed, the idea of a union for servicemen was still just an idea.

But it was an idea whose time had come.

Now, two years later, the American Servicemen's Union has become a power for GI justice. The ASU has members at every major U.S. base and on ships at sea.

For information, write:

The American Servicemen's Union  
Room 538 156 Fifth Ave.  
New York, N. Y. 10010

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Ten cents to GIs, twenty-five cents to others